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10 April 1959

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

10 April 1959

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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OK Berlin: [The sudden increase in the number of East German refugees arriving in West Berlin--5,485 during the last two weeks--may reflect popular alarm at indications that the regime intends more vigorous enforcement of its hard-line policies. An upsurge in the number of refugees is normal during the Easter period, but the total for the holiday period this year is higher than in 1957 and 1958. The number of refugees was the largest in one fortnight since September 1958, when approximately 6,400 entered West Berlin.]

[During March, 204 physicians fled to West Berlin, an indication that East Germany's efforts to win over professional men by political concessions are still ineffective.]

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[REDACTED]

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III. THE WEST

OK Britain - West Indies Federation: Pressures are mounting for revision of the 1941 US-UK agreement concerning bases in the Caribbean, notably the naval station at Chaguaramas, Trinidad. Chief Minister Eric Williams of Trinidad, who has been making an issue of the base rights question, has proposed a revision conference to the West Indies federal government, which will probably support his request. The British Foreign Office wants an early joint US-UK conference to agree on acceptable revisions for presentation to the West Indies.

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OK Cuba: Prime Minister Fidel Castro will seek substantial US financial aid during his visit here beginning 15 April. Felipe Pazos, president of Cuba's National Bank, advised the US Embassy in Havana on 8 April that because of the decline in the world demand for sugar and increasing unemployment in Cuba, the bank has modified its former position against foreign financial assistance.

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East German Refugee Figures Mount Sharply

[The sharp rise in the number of refugees seeking asylum in West Berlin in the two weeks ending 7 April, while reflecting increased opportunities for escape afforded by the four-day Easter holiday, probably indicates growing popular alarm evoked by the regime's recent declarations that its socialization policies will be implemented more vigorously. During the last week of this period some 3,462 East Germans were processed by refugee officials in West Berlin, compared with only 1,462 in the week ending 24 March and 2,023 the week ending 31 March. This is the largest total in one fortnight since last September, at the close of the traditional summer mass flights. The two-week total of 5,485 also exceeds the numbers escaping during the comparable Easter periods in 1957 and 1958, although falling below that of 1956.]

[Of more immediate concern to the East German regime is the defection of some 204 doctors during the month of March, compared with a total of 1,242 during the whole of 1958. The loss of this number of physicians, more than six months after the regime made important political concessions to halt the exodus, will aggravate the already serious shortage of competent professional men which has forced the regime to import doctors and medical professors from the satellites.]

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III. THE WEST

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Revision of West Indian Base Agreement Sought

(Pressures are mounting for revision of the 1941 US-UK leased bases agreement regarding US facilities in the Caribbean. Principal facilities involved are the naval station at Chaguaramas, Trinidad, and guided-missile tracking stations at Antigua and St. Lucia.)

(Chief Minister Eric Williams of Trinidad, who has made a major issue of the base question, has proposed to the West Indies Federation government a revision conference attended by Trinidad, the federal government, the US, and Britain. While there is as yet little public concern over the presence of US bases, Williams' political influence is probably sufficient to force the federal government to support his request. Williams continues to want Chaguaramas for the federal capital and is dissatisfied with the US assurance that the military need for Chaguaramas will be reconsidered in about 1968.)

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(London insists that the US right to retain bases, including Chaguaramas, will not be questioned, and that it would suggest only minor revisions regarding customs and jurisdiction within base areas, for example. London might also suggest that the US should offer some concession such as an annual rent to the federation.)

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Cuba May Seek US Loans

(Prime Minister Fidel Castro, who begins a visit to Washington on 15 April, may seek substantial US financial aid as well as a larger share of the US sugar market. Cuba's economic outlook has been growing steadily worse during recent weeks, and the extremely low price of sugar on the world market threatens to reduce the national income this year. Sugar normally accounts for about 25 percent of Cuba's income.)

(Felipe Pazos, president of the Cuban National Bank, advised the US Embassy in Havana on 8 April that the unfavorable world sugar market and increasing unemployment in Cuba had caused the bank to reverse its attitude toward foreign financial assistance. The bank was unable to reach agreement with an International Monetary Fund team which visited Cuba in March in connection with a proposed \$25,000,000 credit. Pazos, who will accompany Castro to the United States, favors resumption of aid talks, and has suggested the possibility of discussing a balance-of-payments loan and several long-term loans for agricultural and development projects.

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